



# NEWSLETTER

**SOUTH DAKOTA DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS**

**SOUTH DAKOTA DEPARTMENT OF THE MILITARY**



## TWO NEW VETERANS SERVICE OFFICERS JOIN THE SDDVA PARTNERSHIP

Clay County VSO Cynthia Aden retired from her position as veterans service officer the end of December. Cynthia served as the county VSO since 2011.

The Clay County Commission selected Drew Gunderson to serve as their new VSO. Gunderson's office hours will be Monday—Friday from 8:00—5:00.

Gunderson's mailing address and phone numbers did not change. His email address is:

[drew.gunderson@claycountysd.org](mailto:drew.gunderson@claycountysd.org).

McPherson County Commissioners have selected Samantha Boshard as their new county veterans service officer.

Sam's hours will be from 1:00—3:00 on Tuesdays and Wednesdays in Eureka and 10:30—2:30 on Thursdays in Leola.

Her phone number is: 605-282-9227 and her email address is: [mcphersonvso@valleytel.net](mailto:mcphersonvso@valleytel.net).

Sam replaces Harvey Schaible and Darell Pfeifle who served as McPherson County VSOs from 2001-2020 and 1998-2020 respectively.

SDDVA welcomes Drew and Samantha to our network and we thank Cynthia, Harvey, and Darrell for their dedicated service to our veterans.



### INSIDE THIS ISSUE

VHA Realigned .....	2
Hy-Vee Giving Program.....	3
Poore Joins SDDVA Team.....	3
Dividend Hoax .....	4
MJFSVH Staff Training.....	5
Upcoming Events.....	6

# VAVHA CENTRAL OFFICE GETS REALIGNMENT

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) announced Jan. 1, the redesign of the Veterans Health Administration Central Office (VHACO) as part of its modernization efforts.

The new structure reflects leading health care industry practices and addresses clinical integration through the joint leadership of a chief medical officer and expanded chief nursing officer role.

This model strengthens and expands the role of nursing to leverage skills of clinicians and non-clinicians. VHACO will also create integrated clinical communities across the enterprise to help personnel better identify and share leading practices, drive continuous improvement and support a consistent [Veteran experience](#).

The new structure clarifies office roles and streamlines responsibilities to eliminate fragmentation, overlap and duplication. It also allows VHA to be more agile and respond to changes and make decisions more quickly. This positions VHA to better support Veterans Integrated Service Networks and facilities directly serving veterans. VHACO staff includes the approximately 20,000 staff located throughout the country that provide operational support to VA Medical Centers. The proposed change in structure will not result in a reduction or termination of staff.

“These improvements will promote efficiency, effectiveness and accountability as the VA modernizes its health system to address veterans’ 21st century health care needs,” said VA Secretary Robert Wilkie. “The reformation will ensure VHA programs, staff and resources are best aligned to advance VHA’s transformation into an integrated high reliability health care organization.”

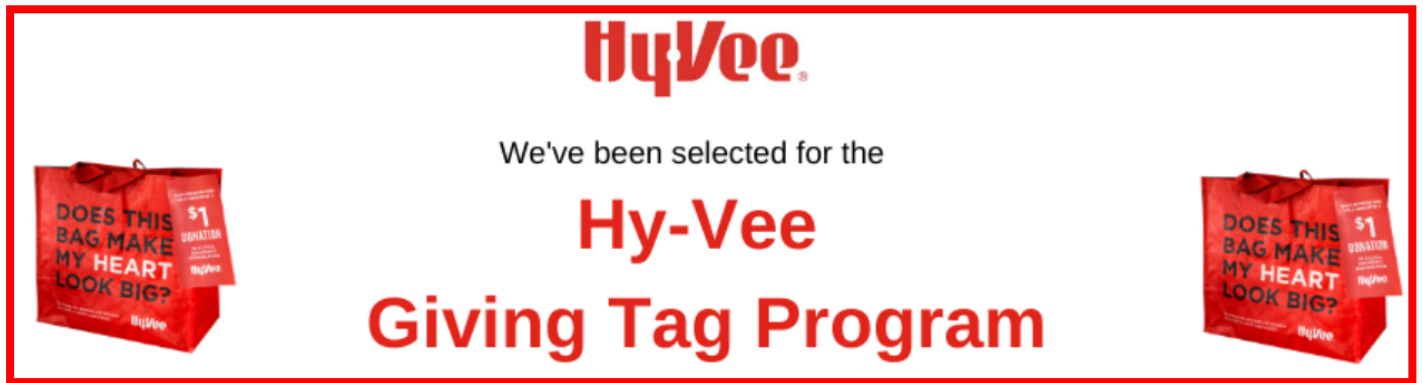
The redesign addresses concerns raised in the Government Accountability Office (GAO) 2019 High Risk List and recent external assessments from GAO, [Commission on Care](#) and the [Independent Assessment](#) regarding the need for improved accountability, integration of the organizational structure, and clearer definition of roles. The changes will emphasize and support VA’s top priorities including, improving patient safety and quality, enrollment and delivery of Women’s Health.

## Veterans Experience Office (VEO)



# HY-VEE GIVING PROGRAM BENEFITS PVA

All Hy-Vee stores are now offering the Giving Tag Program! Every time a customer buys a \$2.50 red “My Heart Reusable Bag” at any Hy-Vee store, they can direct a \$1 donation to Paralyzed Veterans of America North Central Chapter by using the attached Giving Tag.



## POORE JOINS SDDVA TEAM

Bridget Poore has joined the SDDVA team in our Sioux Falls Claims Office. Bridget will serve as a claims examiner.

Bridget is a US Army Veteran and a graduate of Southeast Technical Institute. She graduated with a A.A.S. in business, marketing, and graphic communications.

Prior to joining the SDDVA team, Bridget operated her own child care center for 13 years.

Bridget looks forward to working with veterans and assisting them with the benefits.

Please join SDDVA in welcoming Bridget to our team.



# SPECIAL DIVIDEND RUMOR

Rumors that Congress approved a "Special Dividend" for veterans who do or do not have Government life insurance have been spread for over 30 years. These rumors are false. The only dividends being paid by VA are on active Government life insurance policies. Dividends on active policies have been paid annually for many years and policyholders do not need to apply for them.

"Special Dividend" rumors are spread by well-meaning people who want to help veterans but fail to check out their sources before passing the information along to others. Notices such as the sample shown below have appeared in veterans' magazines, union newspapers, fraternal publications, newspapers and every other publication imaginable.

The hoax has appeared in many forms and seems to change to fit the times. It started in the 1960's as a rumor about veterans with WW II insurance.

More recently, it has been adapted to state that a dividend is being paid on Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance (SGLI) or Veterans' Group Life Insurance (VGLI) coverage.

The VA has done everything possible to stamp out the rumor but it still persists.

You can help by returning the false information you received to its source and telling whoever gave it to you that you know for certain there is no such dividend.

## Sample Dividend Hoax Notice

This is a Hoax >

This is a Hoax >

This is a Hoax >

This is a Hoax >

To all Veterans and Families of Veterans

If you are a veteran, or if any of your relatives fall under that category, you may be interested in the following information. A bill was recently passed by Congress entitling veterans to a dividend on the GI Insurance they had while in the service. Both current and former military personnel are entitled to this dividend regardless. If you are a veteran, or if any of your relatives fall under that category, you may be interested in the of whether or not they still carry the insurance. If you are eligible, you WILL NOT receive the dividend unless YOU ASK for it! The Veterans Administration will review each individual case and determine eligibility. A general schedule of dividends earned is as follows:

2 YEARS OF SERVICE: \$261.00  
3 YEARS OF SERVICE: \$391.04  
4 YEARS OF SERVICE: \$528.00

To apply for the dividend, write to the VETERANS CENTER, P.O. BOX 8079, PHILADELPHIA, PA 19101. REMEMBER: THE VETERANS ADMINISTRATION WILL NOT AUTOMATICALLY SEND YOU THE DIVIDEND. YOU MUST APPLY FOR IT. Complete the form below.

In accordance with the bill recently passed by Congress, I am applying for the "SGLI" insurance dividend based on my prior military service. The specifics of my service are as follows:

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_  
ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_  
DATE OF ENTRY INTO ACTIVE SERVICE: \_\_\_\_\_  
DATE OF DISCHARGE: \_\_\_\_\_  
SGLI NO. (If Known): \_\_\_\_\_  
BRANCH OF SERVICE: \_\_\_\_\_  
SERVICE NUMBER: \_\_\_\_\_  
DATE OF BIRTH: \_\_\_\_\_



# MJFSVH TO PARTICIPATE IN CHATO PILOT STUDY

Staff at the Michael J. Fitzmaurice State Veterans Home will be participating in a pilot research training program conducted by the University of Kansas Medical Center School of Nursing.

The goal of the study, "Changing Talk Online (CHATO)," program is to increase awareness of the importance of effective communication with older adults and to use evidence-based, person-centered communication during interactions with older adults in nursing homes and other health care settings.

This course is designed for staff in independent and assistive living, nursing homes, and health care settings in the community that include registered nurses, nursing assistants, nursing home dietitians, direct care professionals, other administrations and support employees.

Learning outcomes include:

- Recognize the importance of communication to older adults.
- Identify barriers to communication in care of older adults.
- Distinguish between effective and ineffective communication strategies.
- Identify elderspeak and its potential negative messages.
- Contrast effective and ineffective communication strategies.
- Revise and rewrite transcripts to reduce elderspeak and ineffective communication.
- Identify affirming communication.
- Critique communication in video recordings of nursing home staff-resident communication

Research indicates that residents with dementia are twice as likely to be resistive to care if the staff member was using elderspeak.



# UPCOMING EVENTS

Jan 10—VABHHCS VSO Congressional Forum—Bldg 145—Room 108—Fort Meade VAMC—10:00 am (MT)  
Jan 14—State of the State Address  
Jan 15—SD Veterans Council Legislative Reception  
Jan 17—BHSU Military Appreciation Night - BHSU Young Center—Spearfish—5:30 pm (MT)  
Jan 18—Military Family Carnival and Resource Fair—Central Church (2628 W. Ralph Rogers Rd)—Sioux Falls—11:00 am—5:00 pm (CT)  
Jan 20—State Offices Closed  
Jan 27—VFW State Legislative Mixer—Moose Lodge—Fort Pierre—6:00—8:30 pm (CT)  
Feb 10—State American Legion Legislative Reception—AL Post 8—Pierre—5:30—8:00 pm (CT)  
Feb 21-23—American Legion Mid Winter Conference—Arrowwood Resort and Conference Center—Oacoma  
Mar 6—Drop-In Legal Service for Veterans—DAV Sioux Falls Chapter—1519 W. 51st Street—9:00 am—3:00 pm (CT)  
Mar 13—VABHHCS VSO Congressional Forum—VFW Post 1273—Rapid City—10:00 am (MT)  
Mar 25—SD Veterans Council Meeting—PVA Headquarters—Sioux Falls—10:00 am (CT)  
Mar 27-29—SD Vietnam and Era Veterans Reunion—Dakota Sioux Casino—Watertown  
May 8—VABHHCS VSO Congressional Forum—Domiciliary Auditorium—Hot Springs VAMC—10:00 am (MT)  
May 15-17—DAV State Convention—Brookings  
May 30—Midwest Honor Flight—Mission 7  
June 3-7—VFW State Convention—Aberdeen  
Jun 18-21—American legion State Convention—Huron  
Jul 10—VABHHCS VSO Congressional Forum—Bldg 145—Room 108—Fort Meade VAMC—10:00 am (MT)  
Aug 24-27—SDDVA Annual Benefit School—Ramkota Conference Center—Pierre  
Sep 3—Veterans Day at the SD State Fair  
Sep 3-7—SD State Fair  
Sep 10—Midwest Honor Flight—Mission 8 (Tentative)  
Sep 11—VABHHCS VSO Congressional Forum—VFW Post 1273—Rapid City—10:00 am (MT)  
Oct 11—Midwest Honor Flight—Mission 9 (Tentative)  
Nov 13—VABHHCS VSO Congressional Forum—Domiciliary Auditorium—Hot Springs VAMC—10:00 am (MT)

Audry Ricketts, Public Information Officer  
South Dakota Department of the Military <http://military.sd.gov>  
South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs <http://vetaffairs.sd.gov>  
Soldiers and Sailors Building - 425 E Capitol Avenue  
Pierre, SD 57501  
Phone: 605-773-8242  
E-mail address: [audry.ricketts@state.sd.us](mailto:audry.ricketts@state.sd.us)

